Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
Executive Board Meeting
March 22, 2012
MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Randy Uhl, Leon Griebenow, Larry Schellhammer, Jan McGovern, Ron McCartney, Vicki Rowland, Les Askelson
Committee Members Absent: None
Others Present: Lisa Lensing, Fern Rissman, Ardie Kuhse

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) Board Chair, Randy Uhl, called the Executive Board meeting together on Thursday, March 22, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in the Decorah Conference Room of UERPC. A quorum was present.

A motion by McGovern/Askelson to accept the agenda as presented carried unanimously. A motion by McCartney/Schellhammer to accept the Executive Board Minutes of January 5, 2012 carried unanimously.

Randy reviewed the UERPC Grievance Procedure Policy. A grievance had been filed by an UERPC employee and the board reviewed the policy. Grievances are ultimately decided by the Executive Board, whose decisions are final. Ardie Kuhse of UERPC filed the grievance seeking to have her re-graded position reviewed. The re-grade resulted in a significant cut in wages. Randy said she had followed procedure in filing. A copy of the grievance had been shared with the Executive Board in advance of the meeting.

Ardie explained the grievance. At the time of the re-grade, which went into effect January 1, 2012, she requested a new job description. She never received the description. Despite a full workload, her salary was cut over $15,000. She asked for her salary to be reinstated retroactive to January 1, 2012. She stated that the Personnel Manual states that an employee cannot be demoted, re-graded or reassigned unless they cannot carry out the assigned duties or for disciplinary reasons. Those reasons did not pertain to her. She also stated that the re-graded wage is below the area average for administrative staff with experience.

Lisa Lensing, Finance Department, shared budget information. The administrative budget projects a deficit by years end. Lisa said UERPC made many changes to reduce the budget including: eliminating median salary adjustments and eliminating longevity pay. There were also lay-offs and reductions in staff due to programs that had ended. It was said that current legal fees are a major burden on the budget.

Lisa said a decision was made for UERPC to start a reserve for unemployment because as an agency, UERPC is not required to pay into unemployment in advance. For most years, it has been a huge savings to UERPC, but now with anticipated layoffs, the agency may be hit hard. The resignation of the Director and the retirement of Mary Jungblut have allowed this unemployment reserve to be funded. The funds are also used to pay for the search for a new director and legal fees. Lisa said UERPC does not have additional money to support any salaries or salary adjustments from now until the end of the fiscal year. After much discussion to try to find ways to compensate Ardie for the work she is doing, Randy presented the following options for the board: 1): keep her salary as it is now; 2): modify the salary somewhere between the present and the past; 3): reduce duties to fit the pay level as set now; 4): return her to her original salary. All board members agreed this had been a drastic cut in wages and that the position was not being eliminated. But based on budget information, there was a motion by Askelson/Griebenow to keep Ardie's salary as set on January 1, 2012 through the remainder of this fiscal year and to review it on June 30th when new budget figures come out. It was stated that the Board regrets this decision and has appreciated her service, loyalty and longevity with the organization. A roll call vote was called for with the following results: Schellhammer – abstained; McGovern, Uhl, McCartney, Askelson, Griebenow voted yes; Rowland voted no. The motion carried. Ardie's salary will remain the same. It is noted that the Board's decision

is based totally on budget and business reasons; that no discriminatory thoughts or actions were a determining factor.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the progress of the Executive Director Search Committee. The Search Committee has met two times to start the search process. At the second meeting, it was decided to hire IARC to assist. IARC helps in advertising and will screen candidates. The Executive Board will select candidates to be interviewed and select the new director. Applications are due April 27th. It is hoped a new Director can begin July 2. All applicants are required to submit applications online

There was a brief discussion about the lawsuit. Attorney Wolle, who is the Attorney for the insurance company and Attorney Salmons, who is representing UERPC, continue to monitor the case. Due to confidentiality issues, the case itself could not be discussed by board members. There is concern from the board members about the legal costs. It was said that this expense adds to the budget crunch, loss of jobs and salary cuts such as what happened to Ardie.

A motion by Askelson/McGovern to adjourn carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

For more information regarding this committee meeting, please contact Ardie Kuhse at Upper Explorerland, 563-864-7551 or at akuhse@uerpc.org.

The above constitutes my interpretation of the matters discussed and the decisions reached. Please contact the undersigned for any corrections or omissions.

Ardie Kuhse, Board Secretary